Nyabiheke Refugee Camp, Rwanda

September 2023

12,626 refugees live in Nyabiheke refugee camp which is located in Gatsibo District in the Eastern Province of Rwanda.

The camp was established in **2005** mainly to reduce the overcrowding in Gihembe (Northern Province) and Kiziba (Western Province) camps.

Around **49 per cent** of the camp's population are women and children below 18 years old.

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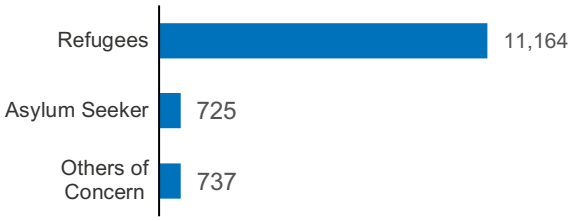

UNHCR STAFF BASED IN THE KABARORE FIELD OFFICE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN NYABIHEKE REFUGEE CAMP

The Mayor of Gatsibo District and other participants sowing maize seeds in the Nyabicwamba marshland.

Two refugees from Nyabiheke camp speak at the Summit of the Africa Food Systems Forum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 5-8 September 2023.

CONTACTS

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Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Nyabiheke refugee camp is managed by the Rwandan Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by the Camp Manager, Social Affairs Officer (Deputy Camp Manager) and supported by the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) staff and Police. The Camp Manager position is vacant at the moment and the replacement is pending. The camp is divided into eight quartiers and each quartier consists of an average of four villages. In total, there are 29 villages.

- Each village elects eight Village Leaders, and each quartier elects eight Quartier Leaders. Among these leaders, the Executive Camp Committee is selected internally. Many religions are present in the camp, but majority of population are Christians (Adventists).

- UNHCR works with 12 implementing and operational partners in Nyabiheke camp: Alight, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Caritas Rwanda, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Inkomoko, Plan International, Practical Action, Prison Fellowship Rwanda, Rwanda Red Cross, Save the Children International (SCI) and World Vision International (WVI) and Impact Hope.

- UNHCR's office in Kabarore is part of the Gatsibo Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and Rwandans.

Protection

- UNHCR and partners in Nyabiheke camp provide a range of protection services to refugees and the Rwandan host community. These include individual case management, supporting survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation and preventing their occurrence, birth registration, issuance of birth certificates, ID documents and other civil status documents, supporting refugees' if they are detained, legal counselling and assistance/representation in the court if necessary, and providing psychosocial support. In September, 72 refugees (49 females, 26 males) were provided with general legal assistance. Moreover, 62 refugee IDs were issued. Also, the issues related to expired IDs (423), some IDs with errors (55 IDs) and others declared lost (32 IDs) were received and are under consideration by the Government. UNHCR together with partners conducted best interest assessments (BIAs) for 6 minors and monitored the wellbeing of the unaccompanied and separated children. Additionally, 5 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) were supported and cases of 18 survivors were followed-up on.

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees living in Nyabiheke camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. In September, the Government and UNHCR conducted biometrics capturing for 504 refugee children who turned 16 years old. Also, the Government assessed and cleared the nationality concerns of 72 individuals. UNHCR is currently following up on the cases of 41 Congolese asylum seekers who are in the process of the individual status determination by the Rwandan Government,

and in the meantime provides the individuals with a "Proof of Registration" that serves as an identification document. Machine-Readable Convention Travel Documents are also issued upon request.

Education

- Refugee children in Nyabiheke camp are integrated into the national education system. A primary school (satellite school of Groupe Scolaire (G.S) Nyabicwamba) is based in the camp and follows the curriculum of the Rwandan Ministry of Education. It is open to both refugee and Rwandan children who live in the surrounding area. In September, refugee children returned to school after the summer holidays. With the start of the new academic year, the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre was integrated into the national education system from 1 September 2023. During the month, the average school attendance was rated at 92.4 per cent for ECD; 94.7 per cent for the Primary school; 92.3 per cent for both lower and upper secondary levels.

Health

- There is a health centre in operation in Nyabiheke camp, run by UNHCR and SCI. The Rwandan Ministry of Health also supports the centre through providing medical equipment. The centre mainly provides primary health care services, including laboratory tests, dental care, sexual and reproductive health care, HIV services, family planning services and post-natal care In addition, the prevention of mother-to-child HIV+ transmission program (PMTCT) has been successful with zero transmission among infants born from HIV+ mothers for the past three years. Refugees and Rwandans from the local host community have access to the health centre. In September, 3,227 individuals (1,953 females and 1,274 males) were provided with primary health care services at the health centre in the camp, including 501 patients (313 females, 188 males) from the host community.

Food Security and Nutrition

- World Food Programme (WFP) provides support to refugees through cash for food, which is transferred to refugees monthly, via bank cards, and sometimes via cash agents in the camp in cases where bank cards have errors. Refugees are divided into three vulnerability categories, whereby the highly and moderately vulnerable groups receive food assistance of RWF 10,000 and RWF 5,000 respectively. In September, 11,594 individuals from 2,057 households in the vulnerable groups received cash assistance for food.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNHCR and its WASH partner WVI work with the Rwandan Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC) to provide safe drinking water to all refugees living in the camp. In total, there are 27 water points, 60 latrine blocks, 18 garbage collection blocks, 42 shower blocks, 14 washing stands and 75 handwashing facilities. On average, the camp's residents received 16.9 litres of water per person per day, which is below the minimum water supply of 20 litres per person per day. Nyabiheke camp's water is

supplied by three boreholes in the camp - the only camp in Rwanda that uses boreholes for fetching water.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Nyabiheke refugee camp covers 35 hectares of land and has a total of 2,325 shelters occupied by refugees. On average five people live in every shelter.
- UNHCR provides shelter assistance to all refugees living in Nyabiheke camp. Activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation and upgrading of shelters, replacing plastic sheeting with corrugated iron sheets on roofs and maintenance of communal facilities.

Energy and Environment

- In Nyabiheke refugee camp, all refugee households receive cash assistance to help them purchase cooking energy from UNHCR on a monthly basis. Since June 2023, the distribution of cash for energy has been put on hold due to the lack of funds.
- UNHCR works with Practical Action in Nyabiheke camp through their Renewable Energy for Refugees (RE4R) project to provide environmentally friendly solutions to refugee communities. In total, 1,195 solar home systems and 110 solar streetlights were installed during Phase I of the project between (2018-2022). Phase II of the project has started in July 2023 with clean cooking, solar street lighting and solar home lighting systems suppliers operational in the camp.
- Nyabiheke refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its weather pattern and topographical nature. The absence of a well-planned drainage system coupled with the frequent rains of this area has resulted in the creation of life-threatening gullies and ravines within and around the camp. Dealing with deforestation, caused by human activity, has also posed a serious challenge. To prevent further environmental degradation, UNHCR partners with WVI and the refugee community to conduct a variety of environment related projects.

Livelihood and Economic Inclusion

- UNHCR, MINEMA and Gatsibo District partnered to support 228 refugees and 228 host community (in total 456 families) since April 2021, to implement agricultural project on 24 hectares of land in Nyabicwamba marshland through funding from Denmark. UNHCR supports refugee and Rwandan farmers in their agricultural endeavours on the marshland through providing seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs each agricultural season. A drying shed to support optimal production in the marshland was also constructed. Regular harvests enable farmers to make an income and also improve their household food security. On 15 September 2023, the Mayor of Gatsibo District officially launched the Crop season A 2024 (its duration is from 1 September 2023 to 29 February 2024) in the Nyabicwamba marshland.
- With UNHCR's support, two refugees, a man and a woman, both members of the agriculture cooperative KODIGA in Nyabicwamba marshland, participated as speakers

at the 13th Summit of the Africa Food Systems Forum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from 5 to 8 September 2023.

- To promote business and job creation in the camp, UNHCR has constructed two business centres within which 13 rooms have been allocated to refugee business owners. In addition, the market constructed by UNHCR supports 64 refugee businesses. An additional business centre was constructed by Practical Action and is being used by 35 refugee business owners. All businesses are connected to the national electricity grid.

- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an important part of supporting the next generation of refugees find meaningful employment. In 2023, 75 refugee youth (50 female and 25 male) were supported to attend TVET schools, by Rwanda Red Cross. They were supported in tailoring, hair dressing, culinary arts, plumbing, construction and welding courses.

Durable Solutions

- In September, 280 individuals were submitted for resettlement from Nyabiheke camp. The resettlement countries are Canada, France, Norway and the USA. In 2023, Nyabiheke refugee camp has been allocated a quota of 1,603 submissions to different countries, although the number may change during the year.
- Refugees in Nyabiheke camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is currently neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation to the DRC at the moment.